

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in congratulating Ms. Jennette and all the teachers who help mold our children's lives every day.

A THREE-POINT PLAN FOR RESCUING THE NATION FROM VIOLENCE

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, in the aftermath of the tragedy at Blacksburg, Virginia, it is becoming painfully obvious that the easy availability of handguns constitutes a growing national crisis of public health and safety, one that calls for a powerful, wide-ranging response from this Congress.

I am urging Members to support H.R. 676, the Conyers-Kucinich bill, which establishes a universal, not-for-profit health care system, which provides full and comprehensive mental health care.

Second, support H.R. 808, a bill establishing a Department of Peace and Nonviolence, which directly addresses the issues of domestic violence, gang violence, and violence in the schools which is reflected in our current homicide rates.

And third, the 33 deaths at Blacksburg constitute a national tragedy. So, too, does the fact that an average of 32 people each and every day in the United States perish in handgun-related incidents. Accordingly, I am drafting a bill to ban the purchase, sale, transfer or possession of handguns by civilians. A gun buy-back provision will be provided in the bill.

It's time for us to rescue this Nation from the violence which is engulfing it, and I have just articulated a three-point plan to do so.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLSWORTH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

BUILD A BETTER NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker and Members, I stand here today as chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus to say thank you to America, thank you to the president and CEO of NBC News network, as well as the president and CEO of CBS News network. I had an opportunity to meet with them last week. They did the right thing.

Our country is in peril. We need to bring our country together. Thank you

very much for the senior staffs of both of those organizations and for the people of America for standing up and speaking out.

We are in trying times at the moment, and there is much we must do to bring our country together and make our families stronger. Kudos, most gracious love, to the women of the Rutgers' basketball team, 10 young women, all honor students, child prodigies, dedicated and working to make life better for themselves and for America, to get to Rutgers, to stay there, to achieve academic excellence, and, yes, then to excel. Also, kudos to the University of Tennessee women's basketball team, the NCAA women's basketball champions.

This is the 35th anniversary year of title IX. Title IX is the legislation 35 years ago that was enacted that would make an equal playing field for women in sports and athletics. We will celebrate title IX and have been all year. I have spoken to President McCormick, and the Congressional Black Caucus, the Speaker of the House and others will be welcoming the Rutgers and Tennessee teams as well as the president and coaching staffs to our city of Washington, DC, very soon. We will hold a 2-hour summit and hear from the National Organization For Women, a psychiatrist from Rutgers University, some renowned women and others who speak to the values of America.

Today we had the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission in our Appropriations Committee. He came for his budget today. We talked about how do we make America better; how do we shut down some of the smut and other things that are negatively impacting our children. We are a better Nation than that. He has agreed to work with us and together, through this Congress, the FCC will be stronger. We must strengthen some of the things that they must do.

The 1934 law is archaic. The courts have interpreted that law very narrowly. This is far bigger than a person. This is about the strength and success of our families, of our children.

On behalf of the men and women who serve in this United States Congress, and specifically the men and women of the Congressional Black Caucus, let us rise up and build a better Nation for our sisters, our girls, our women, and, yes, our men and boys.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

OPEN BORDER CHAOS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, recent memos that have been released finally by the Justice Department regarding certain situations in the Federal Government, specifically in the U.S. Attorney's office, have revealed numerous things. No wonder the Justice Department fought releasing these e-mails and memos.

We now understand that the prosecution of Federal drug cases along the Texas-Mexico border has dropped dramatically. All the way from Texas to California, prosecutions of drug cases have dropped. In some places up to 25 percent of drug cases are not prosecuted that were prosecuted just a year ago. What is happening is the Federal Government is not able to prosecute drug smugglers, and they are asking the States to prosecute those cases.

Many States—especially those countries on the border with Texas and Mexico, same was true in Arizona and Mexico, New Mexico and California and Mexico—don't have the resources to prosecute all those drug cases.

So what is happening is many cases are dropping through the cracks, all because the Federal Government has dropped 25 percent of prosecution of drug smugglers into the United States because they say they are overwhelmed with cases.

How many cases are we talking about? What types of drug cases? Well, in some cases they are prosecuting cases of only 500 pounds or more of marijuana. Five hundred pounds, that is just a number. But we can relate it to money, and 500 pounds of marijuana is worth about \$400,000. A drug smuggler smuggling in \$400,000 worth of dope or less, in some cases is getting a pass by the Federal Government because they say they are too overwhelmed with the illegal entry into the United States by drug smugglers.

If the States don't prosecute those cases, as many States are not able to do, what is happening is those drug smugglers are getting a get-out-of-jail-free card.

Drug smugglers are not stupid. They can weigh their marijuana. So all they got to do, before they bring that dope into the United States, is make sure they have less than 500 pounds, because if they are caught by our border agents, the Federal Government won't prosecute them because the Federal Government says we have too many cases.

This is absurd; this is nonsense. This is chaos. Law enforcement is mad about this, and rightfully so. One former DEA official in the El Paso sector made the comment that if the Feds decline to prosecute, and the State lacks the resources to prosecute these drug smugglers, they just go free. You have people violating the drug laws who now get away with it in the United States, all because the Federal Government doesn't do its job. The job is bigger than prosecuting drug smugglers. The job is protect the borders, and our Federal Government doesn't do that.